

**FULL LENGTH ARTICLE****Returnee Emigrants: The Case of Mekelle City, Ethiopia**

Haftom Temesgen<sup>1\*</sup>, Abate Bekele<sup>1</sup>, Woldetensaye Gebremeskel<sup>2</sup> and Kinfe Abraha<sup>2</sup>

## Recommended citation:

Haftom Temesgen, Abate Bekele, Woldetensaye Gebremeskel, Kinfe Abrah (2018). Returnee emigrants: The case of Mekelle City, Ethiopia. *Ethiop.j.soc.lang.stud.*, Vol.5.No.1, pp. 41-65.eISSN:2408-9532;pISSN:2412-5180.ISBN:978-99944-70-78-5.

Web Address: <http://www.ju.edu.et/cssljournal/>. Open access address: [journals.ju.edu.et](http://journals.ju.edu.et)

## Abstract

Migration has a great economic, cultural, social and political consequence in both sending and receiving country. However, information about the demographic and socio-economic status of international Ethiopian migrants is limited. This study was aimed to assess the demographic and social-economic status of returnee emigrants from the Gulf States within 2010-2015, the main causes of emigration, problems faced by returnees and intention to migrate again. Survey was conducted using mixed research design in Mekelle City, Ethiopia. Both primary and secondary data were collected from a total of 200 randomly selected returnees, government offices and members of different civic societies. Structured questionnaire and interview guides were used to collect data. It was found that 98.5% of the returnee emigrants were in the age group of 18-45. Majorities were literate (96.5%). The main reason reported for their emigration was poverty as 62.0% of the respondents put their responses. They have experienced physical, sexual abuse during the journey and at the place of destination. More than three in ten (35.5%) returnees had the intention to migrate again. Female sex [AOR=0.46, (95% CI: 0.25-0.85)] and currently married [AOR=0.42, (95% CI: 0.21-0.85)] were negatively associated with wanted to migrate again. To sum up, productive and literate people had been migrated to the Gulf States because of economic reasons. To address the issue of return migration, focus should be given to unmarried people and male sex.

**Key words:** /Emigration/ Ethiopia/Gulf States/ Mekelle/ Returnees/

---

<sup>1</sup> School of Public Health, College of Health Sciences, Mekelle University, Mekelle, Ethiopia

<sup>2</sup> Institute of population studies, Mekelle University, Mekelle, Ethiopia.

## 1. Introduction

Migration is the movement of people from one place to another place either for permanent or temporary settlement within the country and/or abroad (IOM 2011). It could be voluntary or involuntary because of push factors (poverty, war, conflict) or pull factors (the need to have high payment/ job opportunities and better living conditions)(IOM 2011). There are an estimated 232 million in 2013(United Nations 2013), and 244 million international migrants in 2015 (United Nations 2016) worldwide. And, 48% of total migrants were women. Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean and Africa share an estimated 43%, 25%, 15% and 14% of international migrants, respectively. In 2015, about 1.1 million Ethiopians were abroad (migrated internationally); of these 49% were females (United Nations 2016). Gulf States are one of the main destinations countries that most Ethiopians migrate (ILO, 2014).

Migration is one of the factors that cause changes in a given population. The changes in size and sample of migration have a great consequence in both areas of origin (the place where people are leaving) and destination (the place where people entering); influencing in the economic, cultural, social and political relationship of a society (Gartaula 2009). And, the lack of respect for the human rights of migrants, trafficking of human beings and irregular migration are the main challenges in international migration (Zentella & Schiesser, 2005). Evidence shows that the majority of the victims are women and children. Women who migrate for domestic labor, or to work in the entertainment and sex industries and those trafficked women are particularly at risk to abuse and also face specific health- related risks, such as AIDS (IOM, WHO, and UN, 2013). In addition to this, since the emigrants are relatively young, the sending countries lose productive people (Alonso, 2011).

Scholars agree that migration presents meaningful opportunities to fulfill social needs such as education and health and in the formation of human capital to build origin (United Nations, 2016), and destination country economies. For developing countries with a large quantity of poorly educated people, internal and international migration into low-skilled jobs could bring about huge poverty-reduction and development benefits (Department for International Development, 2007). The increase in the total number of migrants increased the flow of formal remittances from migrants to their relatives in their country of origin. These financial flows help to assist investment (International Labour Organization 2010).

Globally, people migrate due to economic, social and political reasons. The main causes of migration are poverty, unemployment, social and health problems (Department for International Development 2007), the difference in income rate between countries (Massey et al., 1993), the difference between places in access to income rate and standard of life and natural disaster and conflict (Richard,2002). In developing countries, changing labor markets and globalization has forced people to migrate (Emebet, 2002).

Like other developing countries, Ethiopia is known by the inefficiency of the labor market. Therefore, individuals who have an economic problem also decide to leave their country in the expectation of better job and education so as to be competent in the labor market and support their families. As to an unpublished report of Tsegaye (2013), productive people of Ethiopia who are unemployed because of high population growth and demand for cheap labor are forced to leave their country in need for job opportunity. Further, Ethiopians migrate mainly because of poverty (unemployment, economic) and drought (Yimer, 2016). These migrants are exposed to abuses and exploitation as they often involved in illegal migration (Department for International Development, 2007; Yimer, 2016). For instance, physical and human right abuse even death in some cases. As the migrants are living under the management of their employers, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) Article 2 and 7 and the constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE), that guarantees human rights, could not guarantee the human rights of the migrants. Hence, they develop psychological fear and inferiority because of daily shame and embarrassment.

Although scholars and organizations, such as (IOM, 2011; Martin, 2013; Sprenger, 2013) studied about migration in different regions of the world, still there is lack of availability of databases for the flow of migration. Moreover, most migration studies in Ethiopia are focused on internal migration, the information about international Ethiopian migrants is limited. As far as the researchers' knowledge is concerned, studies held on international migration of Ethiopian migrants are scanty (Berhe, 2011; Teshome et.al., 2013; Yimer, 2016; Balayneh & Sagar 2016). So, it is very important to study demographic and socio-economic status of the returnee emigrants who were in the Gulf States, factors which forced them to emigrate, the problems they faced while they were at journey and at the destination, post rehabilitation process, and ingredients of migration policy so as to understand their role in the development of the country. This paper, therefore, explores the demographic and socio-economic status, the main causes, the challenges returnee emigrants faced, the current status of returnee emigrants with respect to post-return rehabilitation and integration process, and recommends policy issues that enable returnees who were in the Gulf States to be integrated into migration policy.

## **2. Objectives**

### **2.1. General objective of the study**

To explore the demographic and socio-economic status, the main causes, the challenges returnee emigrants faced, the current status of returnee emigrants with respect to post-return rehabilitation and integration process, and to recommend policy issues that enable returnees who were in the Gulf States to be integrated into migration policy.

## 2.2 Specific Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of returnee emigrants from Gulf State who are residing in Mekelle city.
2. To identify the causes of Emigration to Gulf States.
3. To examine the problems returnee emigrants faced while they were at the journey and in the Gulf States.
4. To assess the current status of returnee emigrants with respect to post-return rehabilitation and integration process.
5. To recommend policy issues that enable returnees who were in the Gulf States to be integrated with migration policy.

## 3. Review of Related Literature

### 3.1. Theoretical Framework

The relationship of migration with individual characteristics, the social networks, and the opportunity structure is presented in Figure 1 (at the end of this section). Several scholars have presented the possible explanation about the causes and consequences (the opportunities and challenges) of migration. Migration has evidenced to be caused by differences in income in the sending and receiving countries. Labor tends to flow from low-income areas (with a high labor supply and a shortage of capital) to high-income areas (with a shortage of labor but an excess of capital). Migration is evidenced to be caused by push (unfavorable conditions-such as poverty) and pull factors (attractive factors) (Haas, 2010; Alonso, 2011). The developed countries require low-skilled workers from developing countries which again attracts individuals to migrate (Jennissen, 2007).

It is also evidenced that migration occurs because of social networks between individuals at origin and destination. New migrants who are members of networks get information about migration easily (Berhe, 2011). Further, the human capital theory underlines that the linkage between migration and investment in human capital. It states that people who migrate to get job opportunity by giving their skills and pay the fee of moving before they migrate abroad in the expectation of success (Sprenger, 2013). The New Economics of Labor Migration theory states that the roles of family in letting the individual decides to migrate so as to develop their income. Then, the individuals help their families to cover migration cost and when they face economic problem (Berhe 2011).

Migration can also be explained in three levels such as micro-level, macro-level and meso-level. Micro-level indicates that the degree of freedom to migrate or not that potential migrant has. It indicates individual values and expectancies in improving and securing survival, wealth and motivation (Teshome et al., 2013). Micro (individual) level, demographic characteristic such as sex, age, marital status, family size at the sending area affect the decision to migrate. Single and young people are more likely to migrate than older age people with family. An estimated 48 per cent of migrants are women, and in some regions there are clearly more women than men migrants (Zentella & Schiesser, 2005). As demography affects migration, migration decreases the population at the place of origin and increases the population of at the destination (Richard, 2002).

Macro-level shows that the economic, political and social relationships between the origin and destination countries. It indicates opportunity structures such as economies, politics and cultural setting. Economic expresses income and unemployment differentials; politics shows regulation of spatial mobility through regional states and international government-political operation and religious conflicts (Teshome et al. 2013). At macro- level, migration affects population growth, fertility and mortality of the origin and destination. In the origin, there will be high supply of labor work and young people. Demographic change in demographic dynamics, which is decreasing in population growth and fertility, can affect migration. This condition causes shortage of young emigrants (Skeldon, 2013). These groups of countries and communities influence future migration, trade and investment flows of both sending and receiving countries (Zentella & Schiesser, 2005; Melde, 2012).

Meso-level indicates collective and social networks that ties families and households and organizations such as NGOs which help in migration and settlement in transaction of information (Teshome et al., 2013). Social network provide a significant information and migrants who are member of social network can be more beneficiary than those who are not. Social relation makes people feel safe and part of the community where they live.

### **3.2. The Challenges and Opportunities of International Migration**

Disadvantage of migration is the limitation of migrants' rights, particularly labour rights. But the most important emerging challenge lies in defining the relationship between migration and security (Melde, 2012). Poorer people in the world are unable to migrate internationally thus they are unable to share in any benefits of international migration. Moreover, even when they migrate, they have often limited ability to benefit their home communities and families. Migration to developing world including Africa has given rise to new challenges in the countries as they have limited infrastructure or policies to deal with immigrant rights and integration (Martin, 2013). However, migration also leads to great opportunities. International migration has been one of the most forceful in the development of modern states and societies, including economic

success (Melde, 2012). Similarly, in countries where integration has been successful, immigrants have been noted to make significant contributions to the economic, social and cultural development of the societies in which they have settled. The opportunity to travel through legal channels can significantly increase the benefits of migration. On the other hand, the risks of migration are greatly increased when people move on an irregular basis (channels that are neither recognized nor legal) (DFID, 2007). The migration of highly skilled professional that is called the Brain-Drain has a number of positive aspects. It is through skilled migration programs that migrants are given an opportunity to acquire or improve skills and experience abroad (Dustmann, 2011).

The sending and receiving countries gain through the flow of remittances –money and goods which sent back by the migrants to their relatives or friends (Richard & Page 2005). Remittances are the main way of reducing poverty. They are used to fulfill basic needs such as food, shelter and cloth as these cover more than 60% of the total. The rest of the total remittances used to run small business, for education and health care. Globally, migrant workers transferred 397 billion dollars to their home country in 2008. Therefore, remittances facilitate better life standards and development of individuals (Beets & Willekens, 2009).

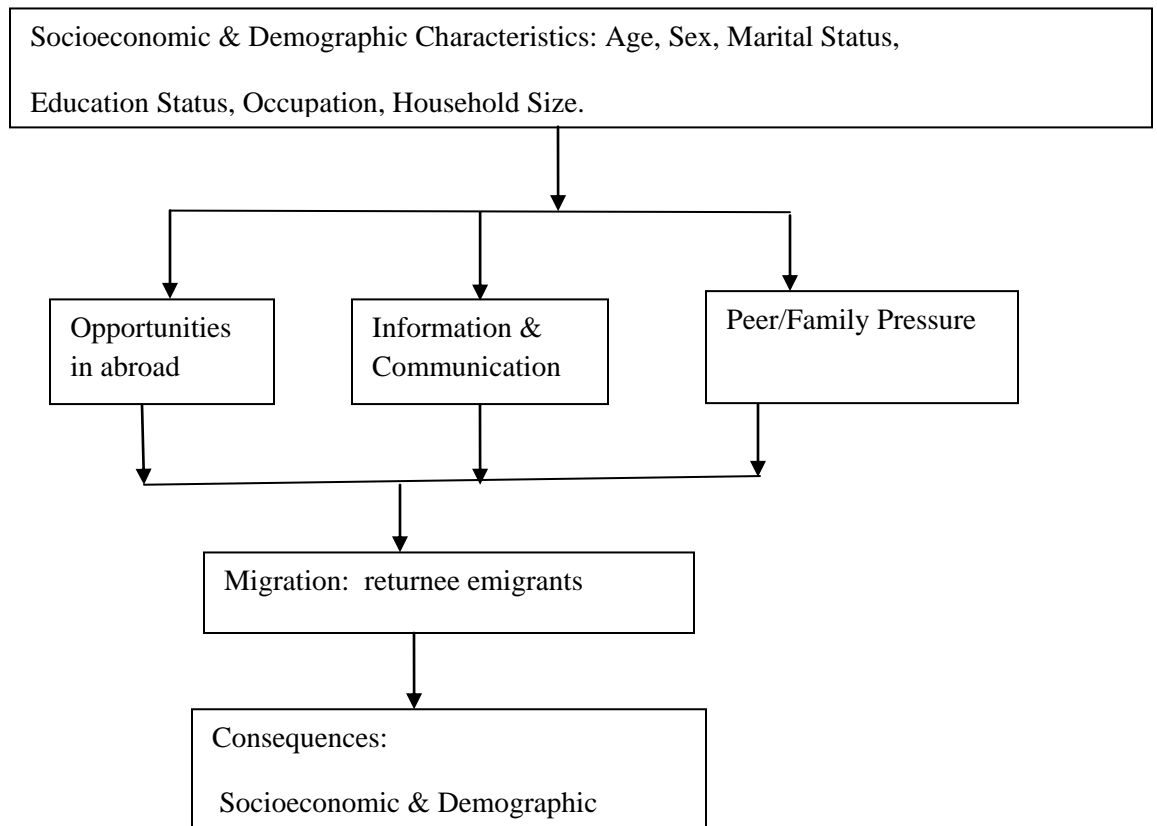


Figure 1. The conceptual model of Migration (Source: Teshome et al., 2013).

## 4. Methods

### 4.1. Description of Study Area

This research mainly focused on the assessment of demographic and socio-economic status of returnee emigrants who were in the Gulf States (in Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Lebanon, Kuwait, Oman, and Qatar) and returned within the last five years and are residing in Mekelle city. Mekelle, the capital city of Tigray regional state, is located in the Northern Ethiopian high lands at 783 km away from Addis Ababa. The total area of the city is about 80 km<sup>2</sup>. It is one of the rapidly growing cities in terms of human settlement, industrial and institutional establishment (Mekelle City Administration, 2014). It has an estimated total population of 241,332 (CSA, 2012) residing in seven sub-cities, that is Adihaqi, Hawlti, Semien, Hadinet, Kuiha, Ayder and KedamayWeyane.

### 4.2 Data

To provide an accurate and valid image of the variables to assess the demographic and socio-economic status of returnee emigrants, mixed research design (quantitative & qualitative research method) was employed (Creswell, 2014). Both primary and secondary sources of data were used. Primary data were collected through written questionnaire, focused group discussion, and oral interviews. Secondary data were collected from unpublished sources such as reports, plans, and recordings about problems migrants faced (Sapsford & Jupp, 2006).

**For quantitative data:** According to the establishments of Mekelle City Administration Revised Proclamation No. 251/2012, Mekelle city has seven sub-cities. From these sub-cities, three sub-cities (Hawalty, Kuiha and Hadinet) were selected purposively as they have more returnee emigrants-according to the recent data obtained from an unpublished report of the office of youth and sports affairs of Mekelle in 2014. From each sub-city, returnee emigrants were selected based on their size of emigrants (Kothari, 2004). The sample size was estimated using a single population proportion – the proportion of returnees that have intention to re-migrate. Accordingly, a pilot study was done outside the selected sub-cities and the proportion of migrants who had intention to re-migrate was 85%. Thus, the total of 206 study sample was estimated by considering a 95% level of confidence and 5% contingency for non-response. Therefore, a total of 206 participants were recruited consecutively until required sample size is attained. A structured questionnaire was prepared for returnee emigrants to let them answer the questions. Illiterate respondents were helped in reading the questions and writing their responses by the data collectors. The quantitative data were analyzed using STATA version 13. Frequency and percentages were used to describe the study variables. Logistic regression model was fitted to assess factors that have an association with migrating again.

**For qualitative data:** Two focused group discussions (FGD) –one for each sex were conducted. Four people (from each three sample area) who were members of different civic societies from the community were selected- making up a total of 12 members- for a FGD (Babbie, 2008). After the arrangement of time and place, the selected participants for the FGD were invited for discussion. The discussion was facilitated by the researcher, tape recorded and notes were taken. Six key informants who were in the position of leaderships working on emigration issue (Office of Youth and Sports Affairs, the Office of Women's Affairs, Office of Labor and Social Affairs, Office of Youth Association, and Micro and Small Enterprise Agency) from sample area were also selected purposively. An interview guide was used to elicit demographic and socio-economic status of returnee emigrants, major causes of emigration, problems that the returnees faced implementation of the post-rehabilitation process and solutions can be done to develop migration policy. The questionnaire was reviewed and analysed for repeatability and internal consistency aspects using Cronbach alpha coefficient, which was 0.85 that is considered excellent.

## 5. Results

### 5.1 Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

All the study participants were illegal migrants to Gulf States. Out of 206 estimated samples, 200 were willing to participate in this study that makes up a response rate of about 97%. Almost all (99%) returnee emigrants were young adults (18-45 years) (Table 1). Higher proportions (55%) of the respondents were female. The majority of emigrants (96.5%) were literate. Unmarried returnee emigrants take the highest share (59.5%) followed by married (30%), and widowed/separated (10%) (Table1). Similarly, according to the data obtained from focused group discussion, most of the returnee emigrants were single as the demand of currently married women workers is very low at the destination (Gulf States). The percent of returnee emigrants who used to live in small house, semi-detached and compound house before immigrating to the Gulf States was 43.5%, 28.5%, and 21%, respectively. Higher proportions (75.5%) of the houses in which the returnee emigrants used to live in (at their home land) were rented (Table 1). Regarding source and flow of information, this study showed that 93% of returnee emigrants got the information about the destination (Gulf States) from their friends and returned migrants (Table 1). The findings showed that 75.5% of them said that the information they got was partially correct. While a significant proportion (52.5%) of those involved in this study funded their journey by their relatives, 29% of them covered by themselves, 18.5% of the respondents covered through credit from microfinance and loan from other people (Table 1). Regarding travel period of time, this study revealed that 30.5%, 28% and 27.5% of the returnee emigrants took them 16 - 30 days, more than 30 days and 1 – 7 days, respectively (Table 1). Returnee emigrants of the sample area used different means of transportation to go to the Gulf States and because of this, the period of time they used to travel differ from person to person.



Table 1: Socio-demographic and Economic Characteristics of the Returnee Emigrants in Mekelle City, Northern Ethiopia, 2016 (n=200).

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Age group (in Years)</b>		
18-29	136	68.0
30-45	61	30.5
46-65	3	1.5
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	90	45.0
Female	110	55.0
<b>Educational status</b>		
Illiterates	7	3.5
Primary	66	33.0
Secondary	95	47.5
College & above	32	16.0
<b>Marital status</b>		
Unmarried	119	59.5
Married	60	30.0
Widowed/separated	21	10.5
<b>Religion</b>		
Orthodox	158	79.0
Muslim	36	18.0
Others	6	3.0
<b>Housing situation before migrated</b>		
Small house	87	43.5
Semi-detached	57	28.5
Compound house	42	21.0
Individual villa	14	7.0
<b>Housing occupancy status</b>		
Rented	151	75.5
Other	49	24.5
<b>Before you went to abroad, who told you information about the country?</b>		
Friends and returned emigrants	186	93.0
Other source(self & smugglers)	14	7.0
<b>Before you first moved to abroad, what kind of information about the country did you have?</b>		
Job opportunities	103	51.5
Better living condition	97	48.5
<b>How correct was the information?</b>		
Partially correct	151	75.5
Correct	49	25.0
<b>Who covered the cost of your travel?</b>		
Myself	58	29.0
Relatives	105	52.5
Credit & Loan from other people	37	18.5
<b>How many days does it take you to reach destinations?</b>		
1-7days	55	27.5
16-30 days	61	30.5
More than 30 days	56	28.0

**5.2 Occupational Status before Migration and after Returned Home**

More than half (53.5%) were jobless before leaving for the Middle East, and 18% were students (Table 2). After they returned 48% of the respondents were still jobless and facing the problem of low income. Of the total, 29% and 3% were engaged in micro and small enterprises and were students, respectively. According to this study, though the research respondents migrated in the assumption of high-income rate at the destination, they had no capital potential to run business and to lead their life. The proportion of participants within the categories of occupational status of returnee emigrants before migrating and just after returned home was almost same.

Table 2: Occupational Status of Returnee Emigrants before Migration and after Returned Home, Mekelle city, Ethiopia, 2016

Occupational status	Before they went abroad		After they returned home	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Student	36	18.0	6	3.0
Jobless	107	53.5	96	48.0
Daily laborer	20	10.0	6	3.1
Micro & small enterprise	16	8.0	58	29.0
Employed	11	5.5	9	4.7
Others (Merchants, farmer.)	10	5.0	25	12.5

**5.3 Causes for Migration to the Gulf States**

Regarding main causes for emigration, the present study revealed that 62.0% of returnee emigrants were forced to migrate because of poverty (Table 3). Based on the information obtained through key informant interview, supporting this quantitative finding, the main cause for emigration to the Gulf States is poverty (economic problem) though the returnee emigrants did not acquire any new skills. In addition to this, false information from persons and other nearby people about the worth of migration made them migrate.

**5.4 Consequences of Migration and Problem Faced by Emigrants**

This study revealed that 43% of the total respondents increased capacity to help their family/relatives, 25.5% expressed better employment as a positive consequence of migration, and 14% developed a coping strategy of living. On the other hand, 14% of the returnee emigrants had gained nothing from migration (Table 3). Returnee emigrants who had no access to skill in the destinations were 85%. Among 30 participants who developed skill, the kind of skill they developed was cooking (n=20, 66.7%) and awareness (know how to do something) (n=10, 33.3%).

Overall, out of 200 returnees, 79% had faced challenges. When the returnee emigrants express the problems they experienced, 41.8% of the sample faced physical attack, 34.2% faced joblessness, 17.7% faced health problems and 6.3% experienced sexual attack (for female) (Table 3). This data agreed with the idea of the focused group and key informants. Both the focused group and key informants expressed their idea regarding the returnee emigrants faced problems while they were on the journey and at the destination (Middle East). They said, 'the respondents experienced the physical and mental attack, even death, prison, discrimination and rape (for female, whether they are married or single)'. Moreover, video recorded by the Youth and Sports Affairs Bureau of Tigray (2014) showed that the illegal emigrants were facing different problems at the journey.

The present finding also showed that the way the emigrants used to overcome the challenges they faced at the place of destination differs from person to person according to their exposure. Regarding this, the present study showed that 79% of the totals were used mechanisms to overcome the challenges until they get a solution, 37.3% tolerate the problems faced, 28.5% tried to solve by asking for help either relatives or embassy, and 21.5% by returning to their home country.

Table 3: Causes, Consequences of Migration and Problem faced by Returnee Emigrants in Mekelle City, Ethiopia, 2016

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Reason for migration</b>		
Poverty	124	62.0
Unemployment	40	20.0
Peer pressure	16	8.0
Expectation of better job	20	10.0
<b>Positive consequences of migration</b>		
Better employment	51	25.5
Develop a coping strategy of living	28	14.0
Increased capacity to help family/relatives	86	43.0
Nothing	28	14.0
Better health	7	3.5
<b>At the time you were abroad, have you developed your skill</b>		
Yes	30	15.0
No	169	85.0
<b>Kind of skill developed(n=30)</b>		
Cook & others (driving.)	20	66.7
Awareness	10	33.3
<b>Faced challenges</b>		
Yes	158	79.0
No	42	21.0
<b>The challenges or problems they faced(n=158)</b>		
Physical attack	66	41.8
Joblessness	54	34.2
Sexual attack (for female)	10	6.3
Both physical and mental health problem	28	17.7
<b>What mechanism have you used to overcome the challenge(n=158)</b>		
Return to home country	32	21.5
By asking for help	45	28.5
Tolerating	59	37.3
Paying Money	20	16.7

### 5.5 Occupation of Emigrants when they were in the Gulf States

More than half (58%) of the returnee emigrants were domestic workers, while 33.5% of them were daily laborer (Table 4). And, 52.9% of them were helped to be employed by the smugglers and 37.8% of them by the help of migrants. The expected stay of returnee emigrants at the destination (in the present study) indicated that 55.5% from 2-4 years, 16% stayed 5 years and above and 15.5% of them stayed from 1-2 year

(Table 4). Based on the living environment at the destination, 33%, 27%, and 24.5% of the respondents said, not this match, bad and very bad, respectively (Table 4).

Table 4: Occupation of Returnee Emigrants in the Gulf States, Mekelle City, Ethiopia, 2016

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>When you were the Gulf States, your occupational status</b>		
Domestic /Household/worker	116	58.0
Daily laborer	67	33.5
Driver	4	2.0
Jobless	13	6.5
<b>Who helped you to be employed(n=177)</b>		
Migrant	65	37.8
Smuggler	91	52.9
Others	16	9.3
<b>How long have you stayed there</b>		
<1 year	26	13.0
1 - <2 year	31	15.5
2-4 years	111	55.5
5 years & above	32	16.0
<b>Living environment</b>		
Good	31	15.5
Not this much	66	33.0
Very bad	49	24.5
Bad	54	27.0

## 5.6 Intention of Returnee to Migrate again and Post-return Rehabilitation and Integration

### 5.6.1 Intention of returnee emigrants to migrate again

Of a total 200 returnees, 71(35.5%) had the intention to migrate again. When the returnee emigrants asked their intention to migrate again, 71.8% (n=51) of them said that "I do not find any job here" (Table 5). Similarly, regarding different reasons to migrate

again, as it is identified from FGD of the current study, the returnee emigrants those who had the intention to re-migrate were among those who had not fulfilled their aims. Likewise, the key informant interviewees also responded that returnees who did not fulfill their aims have the intention to re-migrate. Returnees who had succeeded their aims and run their living standard never migrate again. The returnee emigrants who have the intention to migrate again are those who have not achieved their plan and who are not in a good condition. The returnees may have a social problem with non-migrants and their family. They may have doubts about themselves since their families and non-migrants assume them as wealthy. In addition to this, the migrants' expectations from their society never match with the grass root level. In either case, intention to migrate again occurs when the migrants want to live in the first destination since they already know and have no future plan in their home country.

Table 5: Intention of Returnees to Migrate again in Mekelle City, Ethiopia 2016 (n=200)

Variables	Frequency	Percent
<b>Would you like to migrate again?</b>		
Yes	71	35.5
No	129	64.5
<b>If Yes, What is your intention to leave your country again?(n=71)</b>		
I don't get any job here(in my country)	51	71.8
New job opportunity abroad	6	8.5
I cannot adapt myself here	8	11.2
I know the emigration country and would like to stay there	6	8.5

### 5.6.2 Factors forcing to migrate again to the Gulf States

Among the socio-demographic variables, sex and marital status were statistically significantly associated with migrating again whereas educational status and age were not. Being female [AOR=0.46, (95% CI: 0.25, 0.85)] was negatively associated with wanting to migrate again. Likewise, marriage [OR=0.42, (95% CI: 0.21, 0.85)] was negatively associated with wanting to migrate again in which respondents who are married were 58% less likely to migrate again than their unmarried (single) counterparts (Table 6).

Table 6: Socio-demographic Factors Associated with Wanted to Migrate again among Returnee Emigrants in Mekelle city, Ethiopia, 2016.

Variables	Would you like to migrate again		AOR(95% C.I)	P-value
	Yes (%)	No (%)		
<b>Sex</b>				
Male	39(43.3)	51(56.7)	1	
Female	32(29.1)	78(70.9)	0.46(0.25, 0.85)	0.01
<b>Marital status</b>				
Not married	56(40.0)	84(60.0)	1	
Currently married	15(25.0)	45(75.0)	0.42(0.21, 0.85)	0.01

**5.6.3 Returnee emigrants’ post-return rehabilitation and integration process**

The returnee emigrants were asked to give their opinion whether they get any follow up from their sub-city, support from the community and kind of support they got. The present study (Table 7) showed that 61.5% of the returnee emigrants said that "there is no follow up mechanism in their sub-city". Among those who have said, ‘yes there is follow up’, 61% of them said, ‘the office of youth and sports affairs take care of us.’ In the case of support that returnee emigrants had, this study revealed 44.8% of them have gotten a facility of credit and saving, whereas 56.5% of them did get none of the facilities. And, 70.5% of the respondents never got support from the community.

According to the information obtained from focused group discussion and key informants, the support facilitated by sub-city administration to the returnee emigrants has no sustainability. In addition to this, the support so as to rehabilitate them never addressed all of the returned. All concerned bodies/stakeholders never participated in the post-rehabilitation program rather the office of Youth and Sports Affairs, the office of Women's Affairs and the office of Labor and Social Affairs of the sub-cities. They added that the parents and families of the returnees never treated the returned.

Regarding public meeting, 68% of the returnee emigrants have not ever attended a public meeting on the issues of migration. Based on the information obtained from the report of Office of Youth and Sports Association of Mekelle city (OYSAM) 2014, a public meeting was held on the migration issue with the returnee emigrants and community. According to the response of the respondents, it had no consistency.

Table 7: Returnee Emigrant Post-return Rehabilitation and Integration, Mekelle City, Ethiopia, 2016(n=200)

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Support from respective sub-city</b>		
Yes	87	43.5
No	113	56.5
<b>If Yes, kind of support (n=87)</b>		
Credit & Saving	39	44.8
Training	24	27.6
Working Shade	10	11.5
Welcome & Others	14	16.1
<b>Is there any follow-up mechanism in your sub-city in order to maintain your sustainability?</b>		
Yes	77	38.5
No	123	61.5
<b>Who actively participated so as to rehabilitate you? (n=77)</b>		
Office of Youth and Sport Affairs	47	61.0
Office of Women Affairs	11	14.3
Office of Labor and Social Affairs	4	5.2
All the above	15	19.5
<b>Do you have support from community members</b>		
Yes	59	29.5
No	141	70.5
<b>If Yes, What kind of support? (n=59)</b>		
Moral	55	93.2
Fund	4	6.8
<b>Attended public meeting/s on the issues of migration</b>		
Yes	45	22.5
No	136	68.0
Not sure	19	9.5



**5.7 Returnee Emigrants’ Perception and Policy Recommendations about Migration**

Regarding the perception of the returnee emigrants about migration phenomena, 51% of them said that it is both an opportunity and a threat, 39% said it is a threat. And, 81% of them said that they would stop migration if they had alternative opportunities to work within their communities of origin (Table 8).

The returnee emigrants required to forward their opinion about ingredients that help to develop emigration policy. Accordingly, 35.5% of the respondents said facilitating job or mobility is needed, 29% said the way of increasing awareness of migrants and people have to be included. Returnee emigrants who have said, ‘improving data on migration’, and ‘allowing safe and affordable mechanisms’ were 13.5%, and 11.5%, respectively (Table 8). Based on the information obtained from the focused group discussion and key informants, the participants recommended that the government has to strengthen the migration policy, facilitate legal migration, has to have clear data about emigrants and has to focus on making awareness to the community and returnees.

Table 8: Returnee emigrants’ perception and policy recommendations about migration, Mekelle city, Ethiopia, 2016 (N=200)

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>How do you perceive the migration phenomenon</b>		
As a threat	78	39.0
Both an opportunity and a threat	102	51.0
<b>If you had the chance, would you stop migration or would you encourage it</b>		
I would stop it	162	81.0
I would encourage it	16	8.0
I don’t mind	22	11.0
<b>What should be considered in the policy?</b>		
Increasing awareness of migrants and people	58	29
Improving data on migration	27	13.5
Facilitating job or mobility	71	35.5
Over regulation	14	7
Allowing safe and affordable mechanisms	23	11.5
Job opportunity for youth	4	2

## 6. Discussion

This study showed almost all returnees were young and illegal migrants. In line with this, based on the qualitative findings, the participants forwarded as most of the returnee emigrants were at the young age because they are eager to take the risk for the better living standard. This is similar to the previous studies conducted in Ethiopia and other developing nation (Kok et al., 2006; Teshome, Kanko et al., 2013; Balayneh & Sagar, 2016; Yimer, 2016). This study also showed that females were more likely to migrate. In line with this finding, Fransen and Kuschminder (2009) stated that one of the current international migration flows is Ethiopian women migrating to the Middle East as domestic workers. According to Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of Ethiopia, 85% of migrants in 2012 were female students (Wakgari 2014). The majority of emigrants (96.5%) were literate, indicating that less skilled and skilled people are migrating. This finding was also supported by the members of focused group discussion and key informants. As the destination countries only hire unskilled workers, irrespective of qualification, but attract both types of workers as the unskilled salary of a foreign country is higher than the skilled salary of the home country, which reduces incentives to acquire more education. In line with the current finding, a study by (Balayneh & Sagar, 2016) showed about 90% of migrants are educated and students. So, this condition may demotivate the young learners and could cause less achievement in their education.

This study also uncovered that higher proportions of unmarried people migrated. This is supported by Gebrehiwot and Fekadu(2012), Teshome, Kanko et al. (2013) who reported that most of the migrants are single. Hence, the finding might indicate that migration decision of an individual is influenced by marital status. Majorities of returnee emigrants got the information about the destination (Gulf States) from their friends and returned migrants. In line with this finding, Teshome, Kanko et al. (2013) states that an interaction between migrants and their friends, families, and neighbors who are living in their home country facilitates the opportunity to migrants, such as in financial support, in finding a job and in exchanging information. About three-fourth study subjects were funded their journey by their relatives and loan from microfinance. In line with this finding, the migrants often have a loan to cover their travel cost (Luckanachai & Rieger, 2010).

The number of people who engaged in the micro and small enterprise after they return was higher than before they emigrated. This might indicate that the returnee emigrants brought attitudinal change. This finding is consistent with evidence such that migration presents meaningful opportunities to fulfill social needs such as education and health and in the formation of human capital to build origin (Louka, Katseli et al., 2006). Occupational status of returnee emigrants before migrating and just after returned home was almost the same indicating that the returnee emigrants come back empty handed or not succeeded their aims. In the current study, migration was primarily motivated by poverty. In line with this, different literatures stated that the main causes of migration are poverty, unemployment, social and health problems (Zentella & Schiesser, 2005;

Department for International Development, 2007; Sprenger, 2013; Obokata et al. 2014; Yimer 2016).

In this study, though higher proportions (43%) of migrants increased capacity to help their family/relatives and 25.5% of them expressed better employment as a positive consequence of migration, 14% of the returnee emigrants had gained nothing from migration. As stated by Mulatu (2011), the female migrants' expectation and what they have faced at the destinations are unbalanced. In addition to this, Yimer (2016) stated that migration does not provide the solution to all problems and not all the time it has positive effects; migration has positive and negative consequences. The positive consequences include reducing unemployment in the origin, and remittance flows while negative consequences include the shortage of labor, public investment in education and training (Luckanachai & Rieger, 2010; Melde 2012).

It has been found that returnee migrants play a crucial role in enhancing human capital endowment (Melde, 2012). In contrast, the current study revealed that 85% returnee emigrants hardly had any access to skill in the destinations. Our finding is consistent with another similar study done in Ethiopia by Yimer(2016). Most of the migrant women's work experiences in a foreign country may not add anything above the experiences of similar types of works at home. Because the returnee emigrants are engaged in a work which does not need any skill, both skilled and non-skilled migrants could do the job, therefore they could not gain any skill from emigration.

The returnee emigrants of the current study have faced different and serious challenges such as abuses, health problems and joblessness during the journey and at the destination (Gulf States). In line with this, Yimer (2016) expressed as the illegal migrants faced severe problems at the journey and destination such as poor legal service and less support. They also faced physical, sexual and emotional abuse and human rights violation. Similarly, Gebrehiwot and Fekadu(2012) pointed out that illegal migrant to Saudi-Arabia experience high risk. Migrants work for long hours in harsh weather. They are not allowed to change jobs and are oppressed by brokers and agents indicating migration is not a solution of all problems and has no always positive consequences. However, it is evident that the opportunity to travel through legal channels can significantly increase the benefits of migration, whereas, the risks of migration are greatly increased when people move on an irregular basis – through channels that are neither recognized nor legal (Department for International Development, 2007). Furthermore, members of focused group discussion and key informants agreed that emigrants faced shortage of food and water during the journey; in most cases, returnee emigrants get back to their country empty handed; they experienced unhealthy mentally and physically. But, their parents and families never believe this conditions that the returnee emigrants faced. They only assume that the returnee emigrants had a lot of money. In line with this, as it is stated by Yoseph et al. (2010), the money the returnee emigrants saved never changes their lives and then forced to migrate again. And, migrants faced transformation of social interaction, religious and culture.

Almost all of emigrants were employed by the help of smugglers and other migrants at the destination. This is supported by IOM (2009) that reported as migration network can be expressed in terms of migrants' interaction with their family, friend, smugglers, and traffickers so as to exchange information and get financial help. Migration occurs because of social networks and the importance of social networks in decreasing cost and risk, and increasing income and getting shelter at the destination (IOM 2009). New migrants who are members of networks get information about migration easily. This indicates that members of the social network were beneficial. Most of the returnee emigrants were temporary labor migrants (i.e. migrants who have completed their short-term job contracts and come back to their place of origin).

The majority (85%) of the emigrants reported that the living environment of the destination country was not good. The intention to stay at the destination either temporarily or permanently implies negative and positive factors. The negative factors are not having a job, good standard of living, human right, and discrimination while the positive factors are having found a job, having good living standard and reward. As the migrants are living under the management of their employers, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) Article 2 and 7 and constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) that guarantees human rights could not guarantee the human rights of the migrants (Mulatu, 2011). This could be the reason for emigrants to live in the unsuitable environment as findings from the present study.

The returnee emigrants those who have the intention to re-migrate were among those who have not fulfilled their aims such as getting money to help themselves and family. So, the focus should be placed on helping individuals to create conditions in which people are not forced to leave their homes again. The present study showed that being female and having marriage are prohibiting factors of return migration. However, the researchers recommend further study on the reason why these groups have a negative relationship with intention to migrate again.

The follow-up of returnee emigrants from the community and governmental organizations was reported as not sustainable and there is no follow-up mechanism in their sub-city. Moreover, they reported as the support did not address all returnees and even the parents and families of the returnees never treated the returned. In line with this, (World Bank, 2009) showed that challenge of integration is most a key in cities. Migration motivated by less support of a community of origins. To address the integration problem, the return is becoming burning issue throughout the world and is included into governments' management policies. To strengthen this, frame works, such as rehabilitation, reintegration, reconstruction and repatriation has been developed by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). And, this frame work stresses on an integrated approach. Hence, the government and other actors on the issue of migration are better to use this framework. Consequently, the return to home country can be encouraged. This is further explained by Oomen (2013):

*Return is most sustainable when coupled with assistance mechanisms which support the creation of socioeconomic opportunities and prevent the exclusion and separation of returnees and non-migrant communities. Besides the economic aspects of reintegration, the sustainable return is also based on returnees' degree of social and political reintegration. Many policies which have been considered 'best practices' aim to link pre-departure and post-arrival situation in order to provide adequate assistance (p.18).*

The policy of Ministry of Youth, Sport and Culture (MYSC) stated that support for youth should be facilitated to help them so as to play their role in creating new jobs and could benefit from (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia 2004). However, in implementing this support at the grass root level seems minimal according to the response of the returnee emigrants. But, if support and other integration problems are addressed, returnee emigrants will play an important role within their community. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate the post-return rehabilitation and integration process of returnee emigrants to understand the situation in the country of origin.

The meeting on issues of migrants was reported as minimal. So, it needs concentration so as to make the society aware. In the youth and economic development policy of MYSC (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2004), youth have the right to participate in the plan, implementation and evaluation of national policy, strategy and programs. Based on this right of youth, letting the emigrants participate in the public meeting and make them aware is mandatory.

Generally, the study subjects recommended that the government has to strengthen the migration policy, facilitate legal migration, have clear data about emigrants and focus on making awareness to the community and returnees.

## 7. Conclusions

This study revealed that many young people are becoming victims of illegal migration. Though Ethiopian government is taking measures to secure emigrants' life and return them to their home country, still the returnees have the intention to migrate again. The main reason to have intention to re-migrate was they fear joblessness in their country.

Most of the returnee emigrants were literate and young. Further, currently married subjects and females have lower odds to migrate again than unmarried ones and males, respectively. The flow of young people shows that labor tends to flow from low-income areas to high-income areas according to neoclassical theory (Haas, 2010). Likewise, in the current study, the respondents migrated to the Gulf States because of economic problem and to improve their living standards and help their family. Even if, economic problem is the main cause of emigration, in addition to this, because of lack of awareness, the young people exposed to false information about migration and migration risk. Returnee emigrants experienced abuses and exploitation while they were on the journey and in the Gulf States. It is therefore recommended that the causes of irregular

emigration should be addressed well. Moreover, though the returnees' family and the community are welcoming them, it lasts for short period of time, and they had non-sustainable support from concerned bodies and community. Therefore, all stakeholders should focus in designing and implementing sustainable programs such as post – rehabilitation counseling and set up support for returnees. In addition, strengthen the way of facilitating business and skill development training; making awareness about the micro and small enterprises for returnees and public/community so as to facilitate most advantageous employment of returnees for the society benefit. To address the issue of return migration, the focus should be given to unmarried people and male sex. Otherwise, according to the knowledge of the researcher, since there is limited research regarding demographic characteristics and socio-economic status of returnee emigrants, it should be conducted in other cities of the region so as to generalize and describe comparative analysis for the whole region, and to lessen illegal migration.

#### Operational Definition

Returnee emigrants: People who migrated to abroad (Gulf States), returned and residing in Mekelle city.

Return migration: 'movement of emigrants back to their homeland to resettle' (Oomen, 2013).

Return of failure: indicates migrants who have failed to overcome problems they faced in the place of destination and who return home country quickly (Adamnesh, 2006).

Temporary labor migrants: This indicates that migrants who have completed their short-term job contracts and come back to their place of origin (Foulkes, 2015).

Forced migration: is involuntary movement of people from one place to another place because of push factors including man-made and natural or environmental disasters (IOM 2011).

Push factor: A factor that force people to migrate from a place of residence whereas a pull factor is a factor which attract people to a new destination (Alonso, 2011).

Gulf States: Gulf State countries include Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Oman, Bahrain, Qatar, Iraq, Iran and Lebanon (<http://www.britanica.com/bps/dictionary>).

#### Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank administrative bodies of Mekelle city for cooperation and provision of necessary data for this study. Our gratitude goes to data collectors, respondents who participated in this study.

## References

- Adamnesh Atnafu. (2006). *Aspects of Ethiopian return migration*. AAU.
- Alonso, J.A. (2011). *International migration and development: A review in light of the crisis*. New York: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs.
- Babbie, E. (2008). *The basics of social research*. (Fourth ed.). Belmont, USA: Thomson Wadsworth.
- Balayneh Genoro & Sagar, G.Y. (2016). The determinant factors of illegal migration to South Africa and its impacts on the society in case of Gombora district, Hadiya Zone in Ethiopia: A Bayesian approach. *IOSR Journal of Mathematics*, 12(3), 51-65.
- Beets, G., & Willekens, F. (2009). The global economic crisis and international migration : An uncertain outlook. *Vienna Yearbook of Population Research*, 7, 19–37. <https://doi.org/10.1553/populationyearbook2009s>
- Berhe Mekonnen. (2011). Determinants of internal and international migration in Ethiopia. *Memorandum, Department of Economics, University of Oslo, No. 24/2011*. Oslo.
- CSA. (2012). *Statistical report on the 2012 urban employment unemployment survey*. Addis Ababa.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. London, SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Department for International Development. (2007). *Moving out of poverty –making migration work better for poor people*.
- Dustmann, C., Fadlon, I., & Weiss, Y. (2011). Return migration, human capital accumulation and the brain drain. *Journal of Development Economics*, 95(1).
- Emebet Kebede. (2002). *Ethiopia: An assessment of the international labor migration situation: The case of female labor migrants*. Geneva: International Labour Office.
- Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. (2004). *National youth policy*, Addis Ababa: Ethiopia.
- Fransen, S., & Kuschminder, K. (2009). *Migration in Ethiopia: History, current trends, and future prospects*. Maastricht Graduate School of Governance
- Foulkes, C. (2015). *Temporary labor migration*. Encyclopedia of Migration. Springer.
- Gartaula, H. (2009). International migration and local development in Nepal. *CNAS*, 36(1), 37-65.
- Gebrehiwot Weldegebrial & Fekadu Beyene. (2012). Causes and consequences of out-migration on rural households' livelihood in Gulomekeda district, Tigray, Ethiopia. *Agricultural Research and Reviews*, 1(1), 26 - 33.
- Haas, H.d. (2010). Migration and development: A theoretical perspective. *International Migration Review*, 44(1), 227–264.

- ILO. (2010). *Making migration a development factor: The case of north and west Africa*. Geneva, Switzerland: International Institute for Labour Studies.
- ILO. (2014). *Decent work country program 2014-15* (International Labour Organization, Trans.). Addis Ababa.
- ILO (2010). *Making migration a development factor: The case of the north and west Africa*. Geneva, Switzerland: International Institute for Labour Studies.
- IOM. (2009). *Migration, environment, and climate change: Assessing the evidence*. Geneva, Switzerland.
- IOM. (2011). *International migration law: Glossary on migration* (2nd ed.). Geneva, Switzerland.
- IOM, WHO, & UN. (2013). *International migration, health, and human rights*. Geneva, Switzerland.
- Jennissen, R. (2007). Causality chains in the international migration systems approach. *Popul Res Policy Rev*, 26, 411–436. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11113-007-9039-4>
- Kok, P., Gelderblom, D., Oucho, J.O., & Zyl, J.v. (Eds.). (2006). *Migration in South and Souther Africa: Dynamics and determinants*. Cape Town, South Africa: Human Sciences Research Council Press.
- Kothari, C.R. (Ed.). (2004). *Research methodology: Methods and techniques* (Second ed.). New Delhi, India: New Age International (P) Ltd.
- Louka T. Katseli, Lucas R., & Theodora Xenogiani. (2006). Effects of migration on sending countries: What do we know? *OECD Development Centre* (250).
- Luckanachai, N., & Rieger, M. (2010). *A review of international migration policies: Making migration a development factor: The case of the north and west Africa*. International Institute for Labour Studies.
- Martin, P. (2013). The global challenge of managing migration. *Population Bulletin*, 68(1).
- Massey, D.s., Arango, J., Hugo, G., Kouaouci, A., Pellegrino, A., & Taylor, J.e. (1993). Theories of international migration: A review and appraisal. *Population and Development Review*, 19(3), 431-466.
- Melde, S. (2012). *Indicators of the impact of migration on human development and vice versa*. International Organization for Migration.
- Obokata, R., Veronis, L., & McLeman, R. (2014). Empirical research on international environmental migration: A systematic review. *Popul Environ*, 36, 111–135.
- Oomen, M.J. (2013). *South–south return migration: Challenges and opportunities*. IOM.
- Richard E. Bilsborrow. (2002). Migration, population change, and the rural environment. ECSP report (8), 69-94.
- Richard, H. Adams, & Page, J. (2005). Do International migration and remittances reduce poverty in developing countries? *World Development*, 33(10), 1645–1669.
- Sapsford, R. and V. Jupp. (2006). *Data collection and analysis*. London, SAGE Publications.



- Skeldon, R. (2013). *Global migration: Demographic aspects and its relevance for development*. New York.
- Sprenger, E. (2013). The determinants of international migration in the European Union: An empirical analysis. *IOS Working Papers*(325).
- Tsegaye Tegenu. (2013). How to create jobs quickly for all young people of Ethiopia. Retrieved from <https://www.divaportal.org/smash/get/diva2:938700/FULLTEXT01.pdf>
- Teshome Desta, Ajay Bailey, & Charles H. Teller. (2013). Irregular migration: Causes and consequences of young adult migration from southern Ethiopia to South Africa. *Paper presented at the IUSSP International Population Conference, Busan, South Korea*.
- United Nations. (2016). *International migration report 2015: Highlights*. New York: Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division.
- United Nations. (2013). *International migration report*. New York.
- Wakgari, G. (2014). Causes and consequences of human trafficking in Ethiopia: The case of women in the middle east. *International Journal of Gender and Women's Studies*, 2(2), 233-246.
- World Bank. (2009). *World development report: Reshaping economic geography*. Washington DC: The World Bank.
- Yimer Ali. (2016). Cause and consequence of cross-border illegal migration from south wollo, Ethiopia. *Arts Social Sci J*, 7(2).
- Yoseph Endeshaw, Mebratu Gebeyehu & Belete Reta. (2010). *Assessment of trafficking in women and children in and from Ethiopia*. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: International Organization for Migration.
- Zentella, G. T., & Schiesser, F. (2005). Migration & Development. *In 113th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union* (pp. 17–19). Geneva, Switzerland.